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ABSTRACT

The nine papers in this monograph, written by members of the University Council for Research in Human Resource Development, respond to the following questions: What is the most important organizational issue of the 1990s, and what human resource development (HRD) research questions might be generated from this issue? The papers are as follows: (1) "Dealing with the Unknown" (Glenn E. Baker); (2) "Downsizing: The HRD Dilemma" (Walter A. Cameron, Gerald D. Cheek); (3) "HRD and Corporate Social Responsibility" (Neal Chalofsky); (4) "Organizational Learning" (Nancy M. Dixon); (5) "The Failure of Organizational Change" (Ronald L. Jacobs); (6) "Research Needs in International HRD" (Gary N. McLean); (7) "High-Risk Occupations: A Challenge for Change" (James E. Sage); (8) "Trust in the Workplace" (Richard A. Swanson); and (9) "Looking Ahead in HRD Professional Preparation" (Verna J. Willis). Several papers include extensive bibliographical references. (KC)

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Organizational Issues and Human Resource Development Research Questions

A Guide for Researchers in Human Resource Development

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Preface

The following question was posed to members of the University Council for Research in Human Resource Development: What is the most important organizational issue of the 1990s, and what human resource development (HRD) research questions might be generated from this issue? After much discussion, Council members responded to this question, each in their own way and style. This monograph is the product of that process.

This question is based on a challenge that confronts HRD researchers. HRD researchers must advance the body of knowledge that supports their field and, at the same time, be mindful about whether these advancements respond to present or anticipated organizational issues. After all, organizations are the primary settings in which HRD professionals do their work. Most HRD researchers are worldly individuals. Their orientation is to understand and act upon a changing society. As a result, most HRD researchers view the need to balance rigor and responsiveness as an invited challenge as opposed to an undesired constraint. Generating useful knowledge fulfills the need among many HRD researchers to serve as social activists in scientists' clothing.

The power of knowledge is well known, but the power is lessened when knowledge becomes available only after when it is most needed. This monograph seeks to enhance the power of HRD knowledge by predicting the most important organizational issue for the 1990s. The research questions should help generate research that influences present HRD practices and future practices as well. Focusing the attention of HRD research to address present needs and anticipate future needs is the underlying aim of this monograph.

This monograph represents a cooperative effort by members of the University Council for Research in Human Resource Development, a group of ten universities having well-established research agendas and doctoral programs in the areas of training and development and human resource development. The intended audiences are HRD graduate students and scholars, or anyone else seeking additional insight as an HRD researcher. This monograph represents the first of a planned series of monographs from the Council related to HRD research.

Ronald L. Jacobs, Editor

Dealing with the unknown

Glenn E. "Gus" Baker
Texas A&M University

This paper is an essay rather than a scholarly compendium of citations carefully constructed to focus on a topic of research. It is simply what I think and sometimes why I think it. Readers should feel free to form their own opinions.

The essence of the last decade of this century will be change. Because change is often unpredictable, HRD professionals must focus on dealing with the unknown. To examine some of the issues that must be addressed, a starting point is some of the current, known issues of change.

Current trends

First, the reeducation of the nation's work force is a high priority. As the manufacturing and business segments of the economy move toward the "high tech" environment, those without education tend to drop out of the available work force. Those who remain in the work force tend to be constantly reeducating themselves in terms of both "high tech" applications and general skills focusing on extending their communication capabilities and their ability to solve problems creatively. Those individuals who cannot, or will not, seek technological upgrading or retraining tend to drift into underemployed or unemployed conditions. Extending these trends suggests that there will be more welfare either as retraining programs sponsored by the government, as vocational legislation, or through outright welfare grants. The danger inherent in a growing welfare structure is the increased taxation needed to provide for it. This taxation could drive prices upward and lower the international competitive position of the American economy. The only solution is to find new ways of increasing productivity using technological innovation. This, however, could exacerbate the education/welfare cycle into a geometric spiral.

U.S. productivity must find new directions. More small businesses are emerging, many focusing on data processing, consulting, and managerial expertise. This implies an emphasis on training individuals -- particularly those who will be "downsized" from an existing work group -- in self-assessment processes and

entrepreneurial skills. The American economy is also prone to move into communication enterprises and the various opportunities associated with the communications industries, including computer linkage systems. However, smaller businesses do not have budgets for training, making these training factors a function of groups external to the small businesses.

Big business and big industry is becoming more automated, resulting in an increased level of productivity per worker. This is essential in order to pay high wages while remaining competitive with a low cost per unit ratio in the international economy. The side effect is that the numbers of skilled laborers in the work force are consistently and continuously diminishing just as the numbers of agricultural workers and farmers diminished several decades ago. There seems to be a corresponding increase in the demand for those with high levels of preparation in communications, computer, electronic, and problem-solving skills.

In manufacturing a number of changes are occurring. The emphases are shifting from the product to the process. New methods of controlling purchases, accounting, inventory and warehousing, shipment, and coordination of the entire process are being developed and these processes themselves are becoming marketable items. As American manufacturing becomes more efficient, the efficient processes are elements to be marketed.

American manufacturing is changing, somewhat reluctantly, from the use of advertising to sell what is in stock into a market-driven, consumer-driven economy that produces what the consumers wish to buy. This has been the hallmark of the Japanese economy for the last two decades. The Japanese economy tends to focus on what the customer wants and produces it rather than using advertising to sell the public something that they can use, but may not want as much. The current situation of American and Japanese automobile manufacturers is a good example.

A third area is one with a rather broad label of "biotechnology." This term covers a wide range of factors from the development of immunization processes for the diseases threatening society such as AIDS, cancer, and others to biological designs of plants and animals used in food and fiber production to achieve maximal output for minimal input or resources. Again, the market potential may be more in the process of doing this rather than in the products themselves.

Implications for HRD

These changes are known. However, in the course of human history there have always been two types of evolving thought and technological generation. The first is that of refinement; the known will continue to be refined and made more efficient until some future point of diminishing returns has been attained. The other factor typically inherent in change is that of divergent direction. This is typified, perhaps, by Thomas Edison's inventions of the last part of the 19th century. By 1875, the process of producing light for illumination had refined the burning of liquid fuels in an open lamp to using new woven wicks and better fuels, adding reflectors, and ultimately to using pressurized gases burned as vapors against a silk filament or wick. Edison, in a fine example of divergent thinking, decided that some other process that did not burn fuels would be appropriate. He used electricity rather than burning fuels.

Currently, society has displayed a divergent shift from vacuum tubes to transistors, in refinement stages of integrated circuits and computer chips. No one knows if refinements will continue, or whether we are poised on the brink of some new, revolutionary concept.

What types of divergent elements may occur in this technological society? Who knows? The only predictable element is that there will likely be some divergent changes that may result in new revolutionary breakthroughs, creating the need for new and different types of learning and training appropriate for the labor market and both current and new employees.

All of these factors suggest that the HRD professional must be prepared to focus on conceptual, creative, problem-solving programs. These qualities will be desired not only by managerial levels, but by production levels as well; the need for these skills will increase at all levels. Undoubtedly, there will be a period of somewhat outlandish hucksterism where wild and far-reaching claims are made for various systems before an established methodology begins to emerge. The training and development professional must deal with the ridiculous as well as the sublime.

HRD professionals must also be able to focus efforts on preparing people to deal with changing technology. Frequently, these may simply be judgmental factors so that consultants may be employed or manufacturers be required to provide training with the new equipment, rather than the HRD professionals feeling obliged to develop all of these programs themselves. In addition, HRD professionals must be prepared to shift the focus from small-scale

programs on how to perform specific elements, or how to operate a particular machine, to broader elements. These could include creativity, problem solving, and how to plan, instigate, and evaluate change. On the managerial scale they could include the broader concept of organizational development, and on the lesser scale work force relations --how to deal with the work force and how to bring about effective change to the advantage of the worker, the management, and the economy.

Research in, about, and for training appropriate to small businesses will be needed. Sources for such research may be public sector groups such as universities, chambers of commerce, and consortia. That small businesses will need trained people is obvious. Specifically, who needs what and where they can get it remains obscure.

In addition, the HRD professional must be able to focus on information processing. This has been the traditional role of researchers: devising systems of finding valid information and then manipulating the appropriate data in mysterious and statistical methods to provide reliable information for interpretations from which decisions could be made. The basic demands may not change, but change will occur in the time allowed regardless of the availability of the information. More and more, the HRD professional should be included in decision-making structures in terms of keeping jobs aligned to available talent or keeping employment needs in line with talent that can be retrained with minimal added change. They may also be called upon to help design data-gathering systems that could sensitize management as to when technological changes should be instigated.

There will likely be an increased use of tuition grants for extensive education experiences rather than providing "in-house" training. For example, a large telecommunications company recently decided to minimize its own internal training processes in favor of hiring individuals who had acquired the technological background externally to the company. They used tuition grants to encourage individuals to seek and complete associate degree programs that equipped the employees with essentially the same skills and background provided by the company's training programs. The difference was that the company spent approximately $95,000 per individual for in-house training as opposed to approximately $5,000 in tuition grants. The qualifications were approximately the same.

The role of the HRD professional may shift from training to evaluating the available training and to evaluating the structure of the job to prevent any job from becoming so esoteric and unique that in-

house training is the only method of developing individuals for that particular job.

The next question then is how does a training and development professional find out this information? There are no readily available data for general situations. Each situation is specific and unique, but may not be clearly defined. There will not be time to use rigid, scientific sampling rules and the data will not always be coded as ratios or integral numbers from which statistical analysis can be readily employed. In addition, data access will be fragmented, often restricted and unavailable, and always difficult to obtain. To offset this factor, computers have also made larger quantities of data available. However, data may need to be extracted from secondary sources where controls are not operative. Thus more data may have less validity.

The quantitative researcher may be as ineffective as a traditional qualitative researcher who wishes to observe and meditate on the significance of any observed event for two or three years before making a decision. Decisions will be forced by the need for action and made from the available --even though unscientific --information. Triangulation as a research skill may become an important tool. Judgment may need to be made on the basis of an intangible quality of agreement rather than statistical significance. The current trend toward the use of holistic research methods that combine quantitative and qualitative methods will be refined. Perhaps the most essential skill may become the ability to find appropriate measures, and information gathering may become a more fluid use of information to make judgments rather than the ability to devise esoteric ways to "crunch" numbers. Why should research as a tool remain static while the technology of the economy changes? Should there not be both refined and divergent methods that develop in each? There is nothing that excludes either research or researchers from both refinement and divergent development in their area. As in the rest of the world, HRD researchers also learn to change!

Which direction will it go? The need is to prepare for the unknown.

Downsizing: The HRD dilemma

Walter A. Cameron and Gerald D. Cheek
University of Tennessee

During the past decade, the shape of America's large private and public organizations has been changing. The corporate pyramid is rapidly being flattened. Managers at all levels, especially at the middle, have been laid off in large numbers. William Morin, Chief Executive Officer of the outplacement firm Drake Beam Morin, says, "More companies are putting resources into positions that are directly and visibly productive, such as marketing and sales. There is a greater emphasis on jobs that affect the bottom line rather than positions that analyze, filter, and report on data" (*American Demographics*, 1989).

Reducing the number of employees in an organization has become known as downsizing. Few large organizations have escaped such work force reductions. Additionally, federal, state, and local governments have felt the sting of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, which has reduced growth and limited the number of employees.

Major work force cutbacks in a company signify the company is changing. However, cutbacks do not always address the real problems. Weak competitive performance, inferior quality, an attempt to sell outdated technology, inadequate logistics, and lack of customer support are just a few of the real problems.

This paper focuses on factors that have contributed to downsizing, ways that this has been accomplished, and the implications for human resource development and research. No attempt is made to explore the implications of reduced financial resources.

Contributing factors

It is inconceivable that an organization would intentionally create a structure requiring an over abundance of employees. Yet, over time organizations have grown and the number of employees can no longer be supported by present conditions. A variety of problems have developed and downsizing is used to solve them. Cameron *et al.* (1987, 1988) cited the following problems that create the conditions resulting in downsizing:

- shrinking markets,
- increased competition,
- budget cuts,

- decreased revenues,
- decreased profits,
- stagnation,
- deteriorating win-loss records,
- loss of legitimacy,
- maladaptation to an environmental niche, and
- disgruntled customers.

Related to these are internal problems that cause an excessive number of managers in large organizations. These problems accumulate over time and are not the result of one bad decision. The following are some of the causes:

- Age, prosperity, and size of organization. There is a direct relationship between overstaffing and the length of time the organization has been in existence. Additionally, the more financial success an organization experiences, the more it tends to create unnecessary managerial positions. Nevertheless, this situation has more complex causes than just time and success. Staff in such organizations believe they have a social objective to increase the number of positions as the organization gets older. This phenomenon tends to slow the reaction time to warnings of economic trouble. As a result, the trouble may deepen and result in more layoffs than originally required. As an organization grows in size, there is a tendency to develop additional layers of management to coordinate and control its functions. With more managers, the number of support staff increases. Additionally, services that smaller companies contract out (such as payroll, printing, travel and meeting planning, maintenance, and security) become in-house functions. The company may become departmentalized, resulting in internal competition; departmental priorities may overshadow those of the organization. Each unit attempts to increase its number of employees to gain an advantage over the others. The result is an excess number of employees.
- Diversification and decentralization. Starting in the 1960s and continuing into the 1980s, corporate growth followed a favored course of diversification. When corporations become diversified through acquisitions and start-up enterprises, they often take on unrelated business ventures in which senior managers have little or no expertise. This results in the proliferation of new layers of management to cope with the diversification. This action is further complicated by the attempt to decentralize authority. Not wishing to lose control, senior managers surround themselves with assistants, adding

new layers of managers.

- Strategic planning. Since the 1970s, managers have implemented various strategic planning models to assist in maintaining control of their business diversities. The net result has been an increase in positions dedicated to strategic planning. These planners put such a demand on lower-level managers for information that additional staff is necessary to respond to the requests. In many organizations, the planning personnel overlap with line management, resulting in slow decision making and increased overhead costs.
- Government regulations. During the 1970s, the number of regulations increased dramatically. Regulations dealing with the environment, safety, equal opportunity, and so on increased the work loads for managers. Many corporations created new jobs for specialists to respond to the government's requests for information on compliance with these regulations.
- Management concerns and new technologies. In numerous corporations, staff departments have been established to deal with such issues as energy conservation, product quality, work-life quality, productivity improvement, and employee empowerment. In some corporations, staff has been added to deal with new technologies such as computer-assisted manufacturing and genetic engineering.
- Expanding markets and lack of expertise. Foreign expansion has added to the complexity problems of many corporations. Special divisions have been staffed to handle these expanding markets. However, individuals with knowledge and expertise in dealing with foreign markets and new technologies have been difficult to find. Some corporations tried to offset this problem by creating new departments. These new departments with decision-making authority have added staff, resulting in yet another layer of management.

These factors appear to be the major reasons for the expansion of corporate bureaucracies. Adding layers of managers has been an attempt to solve problems, which has in many instances resulted in new ones. The knee-jerk tendency to cope with change by inflating the organization's staff has proved to be no solution. Overstaffing can be traced to human resource development practices of American corporations. Documented policy on decisions about managerial positions is lacking.

Downsizing and its implementation

Downsizing is accomplished by using a number of techniques. Companies may invoke a hiring freeze and, over a period of time, attrition will reduce the number of employees. This technique is used when the company has come to grips with future problems and plans freezes and retirements at the same time. A hiring freeze may be imposed for certain types of positions where excesses exist or are expected.

Some companies may employ a version of an induced redeployment technique that allows employees who will be terminated to volunteer for transfer to other locations within the corporation. Incumbent employees with needed qualifications can fill voids and reduce training costs often associated with new employees.

Another closely related strategy for downsizing is involuntary redeployment. Employees are not given a choice in this plan. They are simply given transfer notices. Those not wishing to transfer are automatically terminated.

Downsizing may be accomplished by layoffs with or without outplacement assistance. Outplacement assistance may vary widely. Some companies merely post job notices or help with job-seeking skills. Others offer counseling, retraining programs, and job placement services.

One strategy to cut the work force is to offer early retirement packages. However, companies that implemented such schemes without careful planning have encountered difficulties. Employees they wished to retrain chose to retire early. Companies found that early retirement downsizing efforts resulted in oversubscription. Some companies have been forced to replace many of their skilled workers with new employees (Seibert and Seibert, 1989). Of course, this has led to inefficiency, higher training costs, and lower morale among retained employees.

Recently, almost every type of business in the United States has used downsizing as a solution to solve one or more of its problems. The following are examples of downsizing.

Exxon sold its headquarters building and reduced its senior staff from 1,400 to 320. International Telephone and Telegraph, following the sale of a large segment of its operating units, had a reduction of approximately 70 percent of its New York headquarters staff of 900 (*Washington Post*, 1986). Shortly after General Electric purchased RCA, all 500 RCA's headquarters jobs were eliminated (Banks, 1986).

Reductions at Eastman Kodak went well beyond the cutbacks at its headquarters. Approximately 13,000 employees at all levels in

Kodak's worldwide operations were terminated or accepted voluntary separation offers. Salaries of many of the retrained executives were reduced (Armon, 1986).

Management reductions have not been limited to well-established, mature companies. Many newly formed industries have also been affected. Tektronix had a work force reduction of 10 percent along with salary cuts for senior managers (Tharp, 1986). Hewlett-Packard provided early retirement programs for 1,000 of its employees (Schlender, 1986).

Media companies have not been spared management cutbacks. Major television networks have felt the urge to make their operations lean and cost effective. Among the three major networks, several thousand individuals were laid off (Boyer, 1986). Time, Inc. reduced its staff by 5 percent. These cuts reached the level of assistant publisher (Vamos, 1986).

Too often corporations downsize without proper planning. They fire people, then make plans on how to organize those remaining. Methods used by companies to terminate employees vary widely. The following accounts illustrate approaches taken by two Houston businesses, Tenneco and the Allied Bank of Texas.

At Tenneco, 1,200 employees were laid off over a six-week period. According to eyewitness accounts, many of them first found out they were not longer employed when armed guards appeared on their office floors early in the morning, along with boxes for them to use in clearing out their desks. The stunned workers were given 20 minutes to leave the building, and were watched by the guards as they packed up their belongings and emptied their lockers at the company gym. Those managers who had come to work in company cars or van pools were given coupons for taxi rides home.

Said one angry ex-employee to the Houston Business Journal: "This was at best an outrageous and unnecessary slaughter of human self-respect and dignity...Tenneco obviously planned the day well in advance. More than 250 boxes were ordered and stockpiled for use by laid-off employees. The cab coupons also were purchased in advance. A line of cabs formed with amazing quickness around Tenneco's downtown headquarters to cart all the terminated employees away.

At the Allied Bank of Texas, department heads called divisional meetings, then read off the names of the employees to be laid off--in front of their coworkers. There was only a day's notice that there would be any layoffs at all. According to the Journal, the terminated

employees were told to clear out their desks and leave that afternoon; they received no offers of outplacement or recommendations. Officers were given a month's salary, non-officers two weeks' pay.

Said a laid-off manager: "Some of us had been with Allied for more than a decade. We understood the layoffs, but we didn't understand the way Allied went about implementing them. We were all stunned and disappointed." (Willis, 1987, p. 28).

In contrast the employees at Hewlett-Packard were treated quite differently.

In the early 1970's the entire electronics industry suffered a drop in orders, and most companies were laying off people in significant numbers. At Hewlett-Packard estimates indicated that it was necessary to cut back 10 percent in both output and payroll to match the decline in orders. In this company the obvious solution was to follow its competitors and lay off 10 percent of the work force. Top management, however, was committed to avoiding layoffs. After considerable discussion, a novel solution surfaced. Management decided to require everyone from the president to the lowest paid employee to take a 10 percent cut in pay and to stay home every other Friday. By distributing the "pain" across organizational levels, Hewlett-Packard avoided both the human resource loss and the human costs associated with layoffs. (Perry, 1986, p. 48)

There are many human costs to downsizing. Companies may improve their financial performance, but at a price. Remaining workers continue to have concerns about job security, which reduces commitment that is critical to carrying out activities. This results in another problem of which trainers should be aware because it affects their training efforts. When the threat of job loss exists, anxiety and job stress increase (Kahn, 1981).

Downsizing affects more than just those who are displaced (Perrucci *et al.*, 1989). Workers who are anxious about their jobs resist change. They become more rigid in their thinking and avoid risk taking. Smaller companies require a more flexible employee with a wider range of skills (Becker, 1981). To accomplish this position, retained employees must be cross-trained or retrained for different responsibilities. However, employees will resist such training since they may view these attempts as another way to reduce their numbers.

The self-esteem of laid-off employees is often shattered. The disappointment of losing a job, coupled with bleak prospects of finding

another that can use their skills, can lead to depression, family problems, drinking, drug problems, and other disorders. As one manager observed, "Downsizing is like making sausage. If you like sausage you shouldn't watch it being made."

Implications for HRD

During the past decade, corporations have begun to look at ways of developing their human resources. Some of this has come about because of international competition. An analysis of the impact of human resource development in other nations shows that it has helped them gain a competitive advantage in some areas. Because business interests are being focused on how to develop human resources rather than use them for short-term gains, training is seen as a vehicle to develop individuals. Consequently, training functions have been increasing even while many companies are downsizing.

Training departments are by no means immune to reduction in staff. Training specialists must demonstrate the critical role they play if they are to survive in shrinking organizations. Odiorne (1989) provided some ideas on how training departments could respond to downsizing:

- Revise goals. Trainers must assume they will be building new, lean problems to help employees and managers to operate more effectively. Trainers should evaluate existing training programs and determine those that are making the difference in performance. Trainers must concentrate on goals in training that will have the most impact in an effective, efficient manner.
- Use more technology. Trainers should make efforts to adapt off-the-shelf training materials that can be delivered by technology already owned by the company. At the same time, requests for additional funds for capital equipment, especially for devices that promise to cut labor costs, should be made.
- Use systematic training. Systematic training requires studying the relationships between inputs and outputs. When training inputs--budgets, personnel, and materials--are cut, trainers must plan to produce the same or more output with less. Due to the physical limitations of doing this, trainers must change the way they conduct their activities. Trainers must rearrange, simplify, and question everything about what has been done in the past. The relationships between inputs and outputs must be reviewed constantly and services with the lowest output must be dropped.

- Avoid the activity trap. As is natural for workers, trainers at times may lose sight of the training goal because of being involved in the processes and procedures of an activity. Thus, the activity may become an end in itself and the training goal may be forgotten.
- Apply the rule of 80/20. This rule projects the natural maldistribution between cause and effect: 80 percent of valuable results are produced by 20 percent of the efforts designed to produce the results. Applied to training, this would suggest that trainers concentrate on training that has the most favorable cost and profit impact.

Recent progress has been made in the process of integrating human resources and strategic planning. Although personnel experts have a role to play in integrating the two, it is unrealistic to expect them to implement it. Leadership must come from the top. It also makes sense for some companies to move the training function out of the personnel department and group it with other culture-building units such as information systems and communications.

Ideas offered by companies that have made some successful changes in the way they perceive human resource development were discussed at the Positive Employee Practices Institute held in Atlanta, Georgia, during October 1989. Successful practices offered by companies that are determined to stay lean and develop their human resources included the following:

- Make hiring more than filling positions. Use detailed selection criteria for new employees to ensure their fit with the organizational culture as well as job requirements. In addition, use contractors and part-time employees as buffers to absorb the swings of a cyclical business.
- Make it easy for poor performers to leave. Put teeth into the performance review process. Ensure that how a person accomplishes a job is rated as well as what is accomplished. Obtain input by having subordinates rate managers and having staff rated by their internal customers as well as by their supervisors. Use results of performance reviews primarily to improve performance, not to make decision on raises.
- Design career paths that are horizontal as well as vertical. Include more functional levels than hierarchical levels. Encourage cross-training and reward individuals for being trained in other functions. Do not assume that all good performers will remain for their entire careers or even that the situation is the most desirable for all workers.

HRD research questions

The following are some human resource questions related to the downsizing phenomenon:

- Are cross-training and retraining the most effective and efficient ways of developing the expertise of employees remaining in a downsized organization?
- What are the best ways of training individuals who are anxious about their jobs and who mistrust the actions of management?
- What are the most effective training techniques for preparing employees to accept change, to become risk takers, and to be less rigid in their thinking? Is this a problem for managers only, trainers only, or for both managers and trainers?
- Is traditional "stand-up training" the most efficient and effective way of developing human resources in an organization?
- What are the relationships between organizations' commitment to training and the variables that contribute to the increase in the number of managers?
- What are the relationships between the commitment to training and the factors that cause downsizing?
- What are the deterrents to training effectiveness during and after downsizing?
- What is the role of training in companies that have or have not implemented strategic planning?
- What are the benefits to training departments in companies having horizontal career paths versus vertical paths?
- What are the deterrents to cross-training employees in technical and managerial occupations?

Summary

Downsizing has become a way of life in American corporations. It has been used to solve economic problems. Problems created by corporate maturity, diversification, government regulations, new technologies, and expanding markets have fueled the fires of bureaucracies by causing the addition of too many managerial and staff positions.

In many cases, corporations have been overzealous in their attempts to reduce the number of their employees and are now paying the price. Without proper planning, downsizing has left those remaining with many unnecessary hardships. Trainers are now being

given the task of making things work with fewer resources and are dealing with employees who may be less willing to learn. Trainers can be effective but they must work smarter than in the past.

Certainly, downsizing will result in smaller companies that will require more flexible workers with a wider range of skills. It is also important to help workers become less rigid in their thinking, not resist change, and continue to be risk takers. Without these qualities, downsizing will continue into the 1990s.

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HRD and corporate social responsibility

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Introduction

Research on the role of HRD within the arena of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is nonexistent and the literature on HRD's relationship to this critical issue is scant, to say the least. This paper first presents a synthesis of the research and thinking about CSR in general and then proposes research efforts that would focus on the implications of HRD's involvement in CSR.

Background

CSR has existed as an organizational issue since the 1950s. But it did not receive significant attention until the 1970s, when environmentalists raised concerns about such issues as industrial firms dumping toxic wastes, industrial pollution, acid rain, employee safety, and the depletion of natural resources.

Three major streams tended to dominate research on CSR in recent years (Zahra & LaTour, 1987). The first delineated the nature of and potential areas for effective social responsiveness. The second identified the actual strategies employed by firms in response to the call for a more effective social role. The third examined the potential impact of CSR on organizational performance, stressing financial measures.

In addition to the lack of research germane to human resource implications, the current scope of CSR has expanded to include quality of life issues, workplace satisfaction issues, societal reform issues, and intercultural issues. The following issues all relate to business' relationship to its employees, the community, society, and the world at large in terms of its responsibility "beyond the bottom line":

Health and wellness. A work force cannot be optimally productive if workers are not physically and mentally healthy. Many employers have recognized their responsibility for this issue by supporting and/or implementing employee assistance and fitness programs, as well as contributing to community health care and substance abuse efforts. (This issue also includes such recent

concerns as workplace environmental pollution and AIDS.)

Homelessness. Although this issue has not been considered a business concern per se, one company has initiated a program specifically to recruit (and support) the homeless in order to fill critical vacancies while providing a community service. In the Washington, DC, area, workers come from West Virginia to fill jobs but have to live in tents in public parks because they cannot afford housing.

Child care and eldercare. The involvement of business has become more than just the provision of the care itself. Combining child care and eldercare programs is one response to improving the quality of the care as well as helping employees with their personal responsibilities. In addition, if business did not provide this service then communities would have to shoulder more of the burden.

Public education. There is no doubt that corporations are getting increasingly involved in this arena, and the involvement is more than just financial support. For example, business are helping children with their health and nutrition so they can be productive learners, they provide jobs and mentors for high school students, and they provide tutoring support.

Literacy. Again, the involvement by business in this issue goes beyond helping employees learn essential work skills to helping employees gain functional life skills (such as opening a bank account or obtaining a driver's license).

Community involvement. Many companies encourage and/or expect their employees to become active in at least one community-based activity and will grant time off for volunteer work.

The environment. Although concern for the environment may sell products, more businesses seem to be going further than they need to just to please the buying public. In fact, this issue provides one of the best examples of the symbiotic relationship of business to the community and society. Communities need to recycle as much trash as possible to avoid having to pay for dumping it, but recycling centers need industry to buy back the recycled trash so it does not end up in community storage areas. Businesses also need to use the recycled material in their products to avoid a glut of recycled raw goods. Finally, the public wants to see that the trash they are bothering to separate is being put to good use in the products they buy and the money their communities are saving is going into worthwhile projects. Everybody wins!

Basically, business has discovered that it cannot exist in an economic vacuum; it must "come out of the closet" and examine its relationship to the world around it. Richard Rodewald (1987) talks

about the difference between the concepts of top management as "agents-of-capital" versus top management as "agents-of-society." He points out that the traditional agents-of-capital view has permitted corporations to neglect doing what they can to develop human resources fully and produce sufficiently many of the goods most persons want and need, including economic and job security, meaningful and satisfying work, equal economic opportunities, high-quality and low-cost housing and health care, and so on. More significantly, this traditional view has, at least in part, caused this country to become a second-rate economic power.

The new concept of top management as agents-of-society advocates going beyond considerations of profits, legality, and market morality and taking into account all of the human, social, and environmental consequences of business decisions. Managers should pursue profits within the law and the requirements of market morality, but they should also try to do whatever they can to use the resources at their command in nonharmful and socially useful ways. In a recent article in the *Washington Post* (February 25, 1990), major corporations were very interested in having their products evaluated as environmentally safe by a new independent group that is proposing an equivalent to the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval. Some companies, at least, do view their participation in such efforts as morally correct, not just good marketing sense. Levi Strauss, for instance, actually has a community affairs department in the company (Willis, 1986). Companies that do not may be forced to make CSR an integral part of their corporate strategy just to stay competitive, and HRD will definitely have a role in the implementation of CSR.

Role of HRD

First, HRD should educate management about CSR and encourage discussion in management development programs. Awareness must precede change, and HRD is in a position to provide that awareness. HRD should develop programs to train disadvantaged and ethnic populations in work and life skills and help set up support services as well. HRD could also propose strategies for involving the organization and employees in community activities. One suggestion is that HRD professionals could teach workers effective caregiving and coping skills in dealing with their aging parents, for example, as well as providing training in job-related skills.

Second, HRD personnel can act as representatives for their companies in areas where they have some direct knowledge, such as

public education. They can offer their services for such activities as team building with teachers, help in instructional design and media development, or training in new learning techniques that can be applied to children.

Third, HRD specialists can take a more professional view of their individual responsibilities to their own communities and to society. Doctors and lawyers provide "pro bono" services to individuals and community organizations. Many local chapters of ASTD and other HRD-related professional associations provide services to community and social service organizations. Several years ago, the executive director of the Organization Development Network spoke about the need for OD (and HRD) practitioners to apply their skills for the betterment of society, not just for the effectiveness of organizations. HRD practitioners do have unique skills that, coupled with their philosophy of helping people realize their potential, could make an impact on communities' ability to deal with their social issues.

Research opportunities

Research efforts could focus on the following areas:

- HRD specialists' attitudes toward CSR,
- HRD value/philosophical base in relation to CSR,
- Areas in which HRD could have the most impact on CSR initiatives, and
- Identification of "best practices": training programs such as Marriott's training of the mentally retarded as hotel and food service workers or Days Inn's program to hire and train the homeless.

Although CSR may not be the most critical or fruitful area of research for the field, involvement and commitment to expanding the vision of the field beyond the bottom line would help the evolution of the HRD profession and help practitioners grow as professionals in the truest sense of these terms.

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Organizational learning

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The development of individual competence and knowledge has been the major focus of HRD over the last 20 years. The need for such learning within organizations continues to increase. Technological advances, in particular, have precipitated extensive retraining of individuals. The growth of service industries has placed greater emphasis on learning communication and interpersonal skills. The emphasis on quality and global competition has resulted in significant amounts of training intended to affect attitudes as well as to strengthen technical skills. Despite this extensive amount of individual learning, there is a growing concern that individual learning may be an inadequate response to the learning needs of organizations in the 1990s (deGeus, 1988). In order to compete and survive, organizations feel pressured to

- learn more effectively from mistakes,
- shorten the time required to implement strategic changes,
- anticipate and adapt more readily to environmental impacts,
- make greater organizational use of the knowledge of employees at all levels of the organization,
- retain critical knowledge that is jeopardized through retirement,
- expedite the transfer of knowledge from one part of the organization to another,
- become more adept at learning from competitors and collaborators,
- stimulate continuous improvement in all areas of the organization, and
- accelerate the development of product and process innovation.

These needs are related to learning, yet go beyond individual learning. The needs pertain to how the organizational system as a whole manages its knowledge and understanding. As theorists begin to reflect upon and investigate these needs, they frequently employ the phrase "organizational learning" to differentiate the processes of managing knowledge at the organizational level from the more familiar processes employed for individual learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978).

HRD practitioners are the logical group to facilitate organizational learning in that they are the learning specialists of the

organization. However, to assist organizations in this way HRD professionals need to develop new theories, skills, and tools that target organizations rather than individuals. This task is made difficult by the lack of practical help in current organizational learning literature. Much of the writing is at the conceptual level. The processes that are delineated are offered more as examples than as inclusive lists. Because of this paucity of established processes, it is critical that, as practitioners attempt to facilitate organizational learning in their own organizations, they consider themselves practitioner/researchers who are also adding to the understanding of organizational learning.

Review of research

Three major reviews of the literature on organizational learning have been conducted: Shrivastava (1983), Fiol and Lyles (1985), and Levitt and March (1988). Shrivastava (1983) constructed a framework for categorizing theories and research on organizational learning. He delineated four categories, each of which represents a perspective on organizational learning: adaptive learning, assumption sharing, development of a knowledge base, and institutionalized experience.

Fiol and Lyles reviewed the literature on organizational learning in 1985. Noting a divergence in views among theorists, they delineated three areas of convergence: (1) the importance of the organizations aligning themselves with their environments; (2) the distinction between individual and organizational learning; and (3) four contextual factors that create and reinforce learning--culture, strategy, structure, and the level of change in the environment.

Levitt and March (1988) reviewed organizational learning from a sociological perspective. They delineated the complications involved in learning from experience or from borrowing experience from other organizations. To ameliorate some of these problems, Levitt and March suggested that organizations should undertake slow rather than fast adaptation, imprecise rather than precise responses to experience, and they should make abrupt rather than incremental changes.

The literature encompassed in these reviews has been primarily theoretical rather than research based. Often the research that is referenced has as its primary intent the investigation of a related concept such as change, diffusion of innovation, or decision making. Findings related to organizational learning are extrapolated from

these studies. Those studies focused specifically on organizational learning have most often used business simulations or have studied organizations post hoc. Examples include Cangelosi and Dill's (1965) analysis of the learning processes of a seven-student team during a semester's involvement in a complex management decision exercise; Jelinek's (1979) investigation of learning in a major manufacturing company, Texas Instruments; Shrivastava's (1981) comparison of the learning systems of 32 organizations; Meyer's (1982) study of adaptation in 19 hospitals that were experiencing a physician strike and; Lounamaa and March's (1987) mathematical simulation of a two-member learning team.

The processes of organizational learning

Although research on organizational learning is limited, there is a sizable body of literature that attempts to delineate the processes and applications of the concept of organizational learning. In order to structure the review of this literature, it is helpful to construct an operational definition of organizational learning. For the purposes of this review, organizational learning is defined as learning that results from the organization intentionally developing, moving, acting upon, and analyzing knowledge.

Development of knowledge

Developing knowledge involves both acquiring knowledge from outside the organization and creating knowledge internally. Organizations acquire information from external sources by:

- borrowing from other organizations through such processes as making site visits, reading periodicals and books, employing consultants, and attending professional conferences (Bedeian, 1986; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; deGeus, 1988; Hedberg, 1981);
- learning from competitors through deliberate benchmarking efforts and through analysis of competitors' products, services, and processes (Normann, 1985);
- learning from customers through identifying customer requirements and systematically measuring how well those requirements are being met (Stata, 1989);
- learning from collaborators with whom the organization joins in strategic alliances (Pucik, 1988); and
- anticipating and adapting to the environment through scanning

such factors as technological changes; societal trends, and economic trends (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Daft & Weick, 1984; deGeus, 1988; Hedberg, 1981; Lundberg, 1989; Meyer, 1982; Normann, 1985).

Organizations invent knowledge internally by acting and then analyzing the resulting information. The processes that facilitate action and analysis are described in later sections.

The movement of knowledge

The processes of moving knowledge includes:

- transferring knowledge from individuals to the organization. Knowledge that comes into the organization through individuals must be transmitted to those who can act upon it in the organization's name. Transfer relies on processes that encourage lateral and vertical communication between individuals and groups (Cantley, 1980);
- diffusing knowledge that has originated with, or been commissioned by top management, throughout the organization. Processes include training, job aids, organizational development activities, and print and media communication vehicles, as well as less overt but equally influential processes such as the symbolic acts of leaders, the reward structure of the organization, and budget allocation (Morgan, 1986); and,
- moving knowledge from one division of an organization to another in order to facilitate learning from each other's experiences. Processes include internal conferences, electronic communication systems, rotation of employees, and briefings (Stata, 1989; Zuboff, 1985).

Acting on knowledge

Acting on knowledge involves:

- functioning in ways that promote continuous improvement in processes and products (Bedeian, 1986; Levitt & March, 1988; March & Olsen, 1976; Schuck, 1985);
- actively designing experiments for the purpose of generating information (Bedeian, 1986; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Hedberg, 1981; Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984);
- designing tasks in a way that makes it possible both to

accomplish the task and to learn at the same time (Argyris, 1989; deGeus, 1988; Morgan, 1986; Revans, 1980; Stata, 1989);
- designating time for organizational members to focus on projects of their own design (Bedeian, 1986; Normann, 1985; Schuck, 1985);
- empowering employees to act (Morgan, 1986); and
- developing multiple skills (a redundancy of functions) in organizational members to ensure flexibility and the capacity to reorganize (Morgan, 1986).

Analyzing knowledge

Analyzing knowledge involves processes that:
- provide accurate and timely feedback on performance (acts) to all levels of the organization (Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984; Stata, 1989);
- focus on what has been learned from the accomplishment of each group task or goal (Argyris, 1989; Revans, 1980);
- make deliberate efforts to reflect on both successes and failures in order to derive "lessons learned" (Nadler, 1989);
- encourage critical reflection to uncover taken-for-granted assumptions about oneself, others, and the organization (Argyris & Schon, 1978; Morgan, 1986; Schuck, 1985: Skruber, 1987);
- prevent existing knowledge from distorting new knowledge (Hedberg, 1981 Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984; and
- encourage questioning and dissident opinion (Nystrom & Starbuck, 1984; Schuck, 1985).

Research needs

At this early stage in the understanding of organizational learning there is a need for descriptive research that will delineate the processes of organizational learning and the barriers that prevent organizational learning from occurring effectively (Schon, 1979). Three types of research are suggested here, each followed by potential questions.

The first method is intervention research. Schon (1979) advocates this methodology for researching organizational learning in *Beyond Method.* The researcher purposefully produces the effect he

or she wishes to study, acting as interventionist as well as observer and recorder. Appropriate methodologies might include action research and action science.

The drawback to intervention research is that the researcher may influence the phenomena being observed. However, Schon explains that this disadvantage may be more a fact of life than a problem. He notes that "in the organizational context, the quest for objectivity, in the sense of freedom from influence by the research process, is probably hopeless" (Schon, 1979, p. 127). The intervention researcher can lessen the danger by being aware of his or her own effect on others and by creating a climate in which others can add to his or her understanding of this interplay. The following questions might be addressed through this research methodology:

- What are the processes that facilitate organizational learning?
- Do the processes differ for levels of learning (i.e., task, strategy, mission)?
- Do the processes differ for different types of learning (i.e., social processes, technological information, values)?
- What are the processes that increase the learning capacity of organizations, that is, learning to learn?
- When can an organization be said to have learned? By what criteria is learning determined?

A second type of research needed is historical research that takes advantage of the wealth of detailed descriptions of the rise and fall of major organizations. Historical references, analyzed from the perspective of organizational learning, could provide valuable information on organizational learning practices tied to long-term outcomes. The disadvantage of this method is that humans tend to be historical revisionists, describing the past in terms of present understandings and interests. Questions that might be addressed through this research methodology are as follows:

- Historically, do organizations with greater capacity to learn function more effectively in their environments? Survive longer? Become more profitable? More fully realize their goals?
- What factors trigger (motivate) learning in organizations?
- Can stages in the development of organizational learning be distinguished?

The third type of research needed is case studies describing organizations that are purposefully attempting to facilitate organizational learning in specific situations. Such descriptions, whether constructed during the events or post hoc, would build a rich base of understanding of the phenomena of organizational learning.

Questions that might be addressed through this research methodology include the following:

- Is organizational learning simply a useful analogy or is it an accurate description of how organizations function?
- Do organizations that differ in size, maturity, type of industry, employ different learning processes?
- What are the processes that prevent or limit learning in organizations?
- What is the impact of the existing knowledge on acquiring new knowledge?
- What is the role of leadership in organizational learning?

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The failure of organizational change

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In the 1980s, many organizational change efforts were conceived by both management and labor. These efforts were generally aimed at accomplishing the dual goals of increased organizational efficiency and organizational effectiveness. Efficiency goals were intended to help reduce costs, eliminate unnecessary waste, and make better use of the labor force. Effectiveness goals were intended to help increase quality, respond faster to market needs, and increase sensitivity to the needs of individual workers. In many ways, these change efforts were revolutionary in that they represented fundamental shifts in how labor and management could work together, how work would be organized, and how the organization might be designed.

Self-directed work groups represent one form of change effort proposed by managers and labor leaders. In general, self-directed work groups are when groups of employees assume greater responsibility and accountability for many, or all, aspects of producing a product or service. This approach represents a substantial shift in authority and decision-making when compared with more traditional work designs. In this case, the group itself typically acts on such issues as work scheduling, quality, and even staffing--activities normally reserved for supervisors and managers. Employees are given more power, but with that power comes more responsibility and accountability. Supervisors are expected to assume a role more like a facilitator, as opposed to a leader.

This chapter is concerned with the organizational issue of why many organizational change efforts, such as self-directed work groups, don't last. That is, after some initial period of success why do some efforts persist and become institutionalized and why others are just temporary phenomena, and eventually fail. What factors determine whether a change effort will have long-term viability? Are most change efforts doomed to fail from the beginning? The importance of this organizational issue to human resource development (HRD) practice and research should be apparent. If HRD professionals are interested in bringing about long-term changes in the quality of work life and organizational effectiveness, then they must know more about why some efforts remain viable while others decline.

The organizational issue

A growing amount of evidence has concluded that many of the new forms of work design do not last. Evidence for this conclusion can be obtained both from first-hand observations and from the research literature. Most organizational consultants would honestly agree that few of their initial successes have gone on to persist in their client organizations. Few change efforts have really become part of the fabric of the organization. Most reports of successful case-study examples tend to describe the situation during the initial success period, and before the eventual decline and collapse of the program. The present successes experienced by organizations using self-directed work groups may, in fact, be another example of a change effort that did not last.

The literature also supports this conclusion about the persistence of change (Walton, 1975; Mirvis & Berg, 1977; Levine, 1980;). For example, Goodman and Dean (1983) examined the persistence of change in selected organizations in which change programs had been successfully introduced and where positive benefits had been identified. They interviewed participants four to five years after the projects had been implemented and showed that only one third of the change programs remained to any discernible degree, while the others were in decline or virtually non-existent. Given the level of commitment of human and financial resources invested in the programs, such a low rate of persistence makes for a distressing organizational issue.

Rummler and Brache (1990) and Jacobs (1989) make the point that even the most well-intentioned programs are doomed to fail from the start. They declare that failure can be expected when change efforts are focused on addressing problems from a relatively narrow perspective--that is, fixing one problem only. What is lacking from this narrow perspective is the awareness that people do not exist within an environmental vacuum. Instead, people work within a performance environment, the components of which must each be taken into consideration whenever change is proposed. Interventions such as training programs address only a single aspect of the performance environment and, thus, are more likely to have a limited impact.

Understanding the concept of institutionalization might be one way to explain why organizational change efforts fail. Institutionalized behaviors in organizations are those acts that are performed by two or more persons, persist over time, and exist as part

of the daily functioning of the organization (Goodman & Dean, 1983). Obviously, institutionalized behavior can seldom be viewed as a discrete phenomena. That is, simple labels of success or failure cannot fully describe any one situation. More likely, however, the persistence of change is a matter of degree that can be described along a number of different dimensions.

Variables that affect institutionalization of change efforts can be separated into those that concern the structure of the change itself and those that concern organizational characteristics.

Organizational characteristics. Organizational characteristics are those aspects which exist prior to the change effort. Goodman and Dean (1983) identified three major organizational characteristics:

- congruence with organizational values,
- stability of the environment, and
- role of unions or other employee representation groups.

In general, they report that the literature has shown that institutionalization will more likely occur, and failure will be less probable, when the values of the change are more congruent with existing organizational values, there is a stable organizational environment, and there is high union involvement in the effort.

Structure of the change. Structure of the change refers to the unique aspects of the change effort itself. Goodman and Dean (1983) identified five variables:

- goals,
- formal mechanisms,
- level of intervention,
- consultants, and
- sponsorship.

In general, the literature has shown that institutionalization will more likely occur when goals are specific rather than diffuse in nature, procedures, roles, and responsibilities are made explicit, the change is implemented across the organization as opposed to limited levels, an outside consultant is used, but not to the degree to encourage over-dependence, and a sponsor, or organizational champion, exists to defend the change from attacks from others in the organization.

HRD research challenge

The HRD research challenge, therefore, is how best to understand and employ the various processes that seem to affect institutionalization of change. Five processes will be introduced,

then sample research questions for each process relevant to HRD research will follow. The supposition is that if HRD researchers and practitioners know more about the processes, then this knowledge can be applied to ensure greater institutionalization of organizational change.

Training. Training is the process of transmitting the new knowledge, skills, and awareness associated with the change. Training can take different forms and occur at different times. It can be used to increase knowledge and awareness of the change at the beginning, to provide more skill-based training during the change, and to follow-up and retrain individuals throughout the change. In general, most change efforts seem to provide large amounts of initial training, but provide reduced amounts skill-based training and retraining as the change effort progresses.

HRD research questions might focus on the nature and timing of training, such as:

- How does the existence of this latter type of training affect institutionalization?
- How does the timing of training during the change effort affect institutionalization?
- What is the relationship of awareness training and skill-based training to institutionalization?

Motivation and commitment. Motivation and commitment refers to the inclination of people to participate and continue their participation in the change. Organizational commitment is an area of increasing interest among many HRD researchers, since a higher commitment is frequently associated with increased institutionalization of change.

HRD research questions might focus on commitment as a distinct phenomenon unto itself and how the presence or absence of it affects institutionalization of change within other organizational levels, such as:

- What types of behaviors constitute commitment?
- How does providing opportunities to publicly demonstrate commitment affect the degree of commitment?
- How does commitment by different organizational levels affect institutionalization?

Rewards and Recognition. This is the process by which rewards and recognition are provided to employees as a result of their participation in the change. In one way or another, all organizational change is based on the notion of perceived pay-offs. Organizational change is undertaken with the expectation that it will benefit the organization in some way, such as increasing productivity or quality.

Individuals who participate in the change must also perceive a pay-off, or reward, and that reward must be of sufficient value to warrant the person's participation. Rewards might be viewed as being tangible or intangible. A tangible reward is offering special treatment or compensation as a result of participation. An intangible reward is allowing employees to make decisions about problems that involve their own work area.

HRD research questions might focus on the types of rewards and recognitions, relationship between tangible and intangible rewards, and the distribution of rewards, such as:

- How does the perceived value of rewards and recognitions differ for different organizational levels?
- How do tangible and intangible rewards affect institutionalization?
- How does the perceived inequity of rewards affect institutionalization?

Adoption and diffusion. Adoption refers to whether the change has been formally accepted after some period of try-out while diffusion refers to the spread of the change throughout the organization. Adoption decisions usually occur at some higher decision-making level, which signifies a high degree of commitment. Diffusion occurs within the organization after formal adoption. How each of these processes are implemented is likely to affect the institutionalization of the change.

HRD research questions might focus on the quality of the adoption decision, rate of diffusion across the organization, and requirements for diffusion, such as:

- How do perceptions about the quality of the decision process affect institutionalization?
- How does timeliness of the diffusion affect institutionalization?
- What are the organizational requirements for the diffusion of change?

Assessment and Evaluation. Assessment and evaluation serve the dual purposes of making certain that the change was warranted in the first place and whether the change achieved the stated goals after implementation. The intrinsic appeal of some new work designs have overshadowed the fact that organizational change must be used to either solve existing problems or anticipate problems that are expected to occur. Needs assessment is one means to understand the discrepancy in performance terms between the present situation and the desired situation. Evaluation provides feedback about how well the change achieved that desired situation.

HRD research questions might focus on the aspects of needs assessment and evaluation that affect the institutionalization of change, such as:

- How does employee involvement in the needs assessment and evaluation processes affect institutionalization?
- How can needs assessment and evaluation data be used as part of the change effort?
- How does employee involvement in the evaluation process affect the quality of the adoption decision?

Conclusion

The intent of this chapter was to explore the organizational issue of why many organizational change efforts fail to persist, or fail to become institutionalized. Two sets of variables were discussed, organizational characteristics and structure of the change itself. Sample HRD research questions were generated from five processes that affect institutionalization and which concern the conduct of research and practice of HRD. Addressing these and other research questions will do much to increase the potential contributions of HRD practitioners and expand the knowledge base they use to do their work.

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Research needs in international HRD

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The "global marketplace" has become a cliche in today's business community. Yet, in spite of the increasing importance of international considerations within business, research in HRD in an international setting has not kept pace. In fact, when the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) published its book on *Critical Research Issues Facing HRD* (Alden, 1982), there was no mention of international research concerns. In regard to international training and organization development, Ronen (1989) concludes that there is "limited quantity and quality of pertinent empirical research literature" (p. 418). Latham (1988) likewise concludes that interest in conducting empirical research on cross-cultural training has declined in North America since the 1960s and 1970s. This situation must change.

O'Toole (1985) observes that a corporation's needs are defined, at least in part, by "the society of which it is a part" (p.17). If this is so, then it is not appropriate to take a set of principles, theories, instructional methods, or materials developed in one cultural setting (such as the United States or Japan) and transfer it wholesale to another cultural setting (especially a developing country) (McLean, 1989). Forti (1981) states:

> Few single approaches could be applied internationally with any hope of success, both because the nature of man's [sic] basic needs is perceived differently in different countries and because the solutions appropriate to one country would be quite unsuitable in another with a different socio-cultural and ecological setting. (p. 2)

Given the need to identify the appropriateness of theories, principles, methods, materials, and so on, for each cultural setting, the need for research in the international context is great, especially in comparison with the amount of such research that is being conducted. Adler (1986), for example, concludes that, in the area of cross-cultural organizational behavior, "only initial international research has been conducted; in others, no research at all" (p. ix).

A paper in this monograph cannot even begin to exhaust all the research needs that exist in such an extensive field. Hence, this paper

is limited to the research issues of particular interest to the author and to existing research of which the author is aware. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to draw the attention of graduate students and researchers to selected current issues and important questions in the field of HRD, more specifically in training and organization development. Kiggundu (1989) calls for more of this research to be conducted by persons from their own culture, to avoid the problems of "extractive research," that is, "research undertaken in one...country for the sole benefit of individuals or organizations in another country" (p. 22). Research conducted within the culture will have optimal impact on the organizations of that country.

International training research needs

What is the status of training and development in various countries? Only recently have the extent and type of training done in the United States been recognized. A major contributor to an understanding of its status has been *Training*, as exemplified by the 1989 industry report (see the introduction in Oberle, 1989). Similar surveys are underway in the Republic of Korea and Taiwan, as well as other places. This seems to be a major starting point for any country interested in improving its training and development.

What roles are performed by training personnel and what competencies do they need? As with the status of training and development, the roles performed by training personnel and the competencies they need are likely to be different in each country. Again, only recently have such role and competency specifications been developed in the United States (McLagan, 1983; McLagan, 1989). Replication of the later study in other countries would have great merit. Such a study is currently underway in the Republic of Korea and Nigeria.

What training and development needs exist in various countries? Sethi and Ahuja (1985) point to the increasing importance of human resource planning and its ability to serve as an integrating tool for all human resource management functions. A significant component of human resource planning is training and development needs assessment, which must be coordinated with long-term organizational planning. An issue of special interest in developing countries is *training needs of women.* In many developing countries, for cultural and religious reasons, women have not received the same training attention as have men. Research in this area requires sensitivity to the cultural and religious circumstances of women within their country.

What is the applicability of existing management theory? How should it be modified to meet indigenous needs? What are the implications for management training, education, and development? Singh's (1985) comments on the materials used for education of managers in India are indicative of the situation in many parts of the world:

Most of the material used in education is derived from research work carried out in other countries irrespective of cultural difference, which...is not totally relevant. The result of this is that: (i) education and training continue to be dominated by western concepts; and (ii) managerial input in industry is not adapted to our own needs. (p. 452)

Such indigenization efforts are illustrated by Chakraborty's articles (e.g., 1986) and textbook (1985) in which he outlines the impact that Yoga and the Vedantic tradition should have on Indian management theory. In the same vein, Sheth (1986) writes that there are

those who have significant doubts about the applicability of the western concepts and models to the Indian environment and, therefore, are in search of alternative approaches relevant to the socio-economic and cultural spectrum of contemporary India. (p. 108)

This question also has relevance to the indigenization process when Eastern management theory, such as that of Japan, is exported to the United States and other parts of the world. Kerrigan and Luke (1987) suggest that

only recently has it been acknowledged that effective managerial skills in nonindustrialized countries may actually be different from those managerial skills regarded as effective in industrialized countries...only now are [managerial skills] being investigated by international and indigenous scholars. (p. xiv)

Hofstede (1984) has made a good start in looking at how management values differ across cultures. Hofstede's work has been criticized, however, for using a single multinational organization working in several cultures. Hofstede has even suggested that the four dimensions used to describe managers (Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, and Masculinity) may themselves have been ethnocentric. It may be necessary to develop dimensions appropriate to each culture if the resulting training is to be

effective.

How effectively is training technology transferred? Seth (1985) points to the difficulty facing many developing (as well as developed) countries in their efforts to determine a social policy for technology and change that can also deal with the reality of a system that crosses several centuries (e.g., a system in which the bullock cart and the jet airplane coexist). The issue of appropriate technology transfer relates not just to hardware, as is often thought, but to systems and training as well. As such, technology transfer is of paramount interest to researchers. Harrell (in process) is currently exploring the professional integration of Indonesians who did graduate work in the United States in the fields of business administration, education, and engineering. Her methodology should be valuable for replication in other countries and in different subject areas in regard to training technology transfer.

What are the respective roles of culture-specific and culture-general training? A long-standing controversy exists about whether training in a specific or area culture is superior to training in self-awareness or general concepts of culture. Pusch (1981) argues for culture-specific training. Gudykunst, Hammer, and Wiseman (1977) argue for a multidimensional approach that uses a PIC (Perspective, Interaction, and Context-specific training) model. Perhaps the wrong question is being asked. Instead of asking which is best, the more appropriate questions may be: When should each be used and what are their outcomes?

What are the outcomes of the six commonly referenced approaches to cross-cultural training and when should each be used? Brislin and Pedersen (1976) refer to six approaches to cross-cultural training. Each approach assumes a methodology or theory that underlies a given training method: cognitive (fact-oriented), behavior modification, experiential, cultural self-awareness, interaction (with members of the target culture or returning expatriates), and attribution (in which trainees learn the perspectives of the host culture, usually using culture assimilators--a series of episodes involving cross-cultural misunderstandings with a set of attributions from which trainees are to choose). Many authors have suggested that using two or more approaches is most appropriate and effective (e.g., Gudykunst *et al.*, 1977; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1986; Muniz & Chasnoff, 1983; Tung, 1986). Considerable research is needed to determine the most effective and efficient combinations for various desired outcomes. Schwind (1985) claims that "few studies have measured the actual effectiveness of [cross-cultural management training] methods" (p. 8). Specifically, he claims that there are no studies of the impact of cross-

cultural cases, critical incidents, or simulations on cognitive and behavioral changes. Sequence of type of approach also warrants research investigation.

How important is language training in the preparation of employees for overseas assignment to countries in which they do not currently have expertise in the primary language? Language training is seldom offered in the United States prior to overseas assignments. Yet it is often considered to be one of the most important training components for other countries, such as Japan. How important is such training? What are the advantages of such training? What is lost if such training is not incorporated? Is it important in cross-cultural training in any country?

Is there an emerging international business workforce that shares a unique set of cultural beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors? Can such characteristics be developed among trainers? Tolbert (1990) found many more similarities than differences in the cultural approaches of Venezuelan and United States business people who are experienced in working with each other. She hypothesizes that a new cross-cultural business work force is emerging that has more in common with each other than with their own cultural origins. She suggests that there is a need for research to attempt "to identify and define" such an "international work force, and the attitudes and beliefs that underlie the behaviors of such a defined group of people" (p. 108). Adler (1986), on the other hand, concludes that "organizations worldwide are growing more similar, while the behavior of people within organizations is maintaining its cultural uniqueness" (p. 46). If such a supranational culture exists, it may be more efficient to train for this culture than for either a country-specific or a country-general culture.

What is the cost of inadequate selection and training for international placements at various levels within an organization? Many estimates are offered in the literature as to the cost of withdrawing a person from an international assignment. The estimates seem incredibly high--Copeland and Griggs (1985) estimate that the cost may be as high as $200,000. Harris and Moran's (1979) estimates are lower but older--$55,000 to $150,000 per family, not counting replacement expenses. Yet, seldom do authors indicate how such figures are determined. Neither do they indicate the level or type of employee, nor the countries to which they are assigned, and so on. More reliable and credible figures are needed if business people responsible for making decisions about international training are to be convinced of the economic payoff for such training.

What is the extent of failure in international placements and why do they occur? Copeland and Griggs (1985) estimate that

"somewhere between 20 and 50 percent of international relocations end with premature return. In developing countries the failure rate has been as high as 70 percent" (p. xix). They also cite Robert Kohls (1979), Director of the Washington International Center, who says that "without international training, only 20 percent of the Americans [sic] sent abroad can be expected to do well, and 40 to 60 percent will quit the assignment early or function far below their abilities" (p. xix). Again, however, few good data support these estimates.

Why are businesses so reluctant to provide international training? Assuming the figures quoted in the preceding two paragraphs are accurate, or even close to it, and if training, as suggested, can effectively change these results, why do not more businesses offer training? Schwind (1985) asks this same question. Inman (1985), for example, found that only 31.5 percent of the United States multinational corporations offered cross-cultural training as an option (down 6.5 percent from six years earlier), and only 6 percent of the companies required such training. Tung (1989) compares the reasons given by multinationals in the United States, Europe, and Japan for not offering training, as well as the types of training offered to various categories of employees and the reasons for their failure.

Who provides international or cross-cultural training? Who should provide it? Ronen (1989) concluded that it is impossible to describe the qualifications of an effective intercultural trainer "on the basis of the research literature, simply because there is none" (p. 442). What should be the educational, experiential, cultural, and organizational background of such individuals? This is an extremely important question for research.

What are the training needs of expatriates, both those leaving the home country and those coming from host countries to the home country? Ronen (1989) has collected an extensive list of attributes for success in overseas assignments. The list is somewhat ethnocentric, however, as it focuses on research about expatriates going from the United States to other countries. Although replication of this list would be helpful, there are two major gaps: a similar list for those coming from other countries to work in the United States, and one for expatriates from countries other than the United States who are being assigned outside their country.

What are the training needs of the families of expatriates, and what is being done to meet these needs? Many of the items in Ronen's (1989) list of attributes relate to family adjustment. Harris and Moran (1979) set aside an entire chapter for family preparation. Yet there appears to be little research related to the needs of family members or what is being offered to them.

What are the organizational rewards and losses for managers and other employees who accept an international assignment? For training to be effective, it must result in behaviors that are reinforced and rewarded. Although assumptions are often made about the importance of an international assignment for future promotions, the anecdotal data suggest that such assignments may as often hinder advancement as support it. Empirical data are needed to support or refute such assumptions.

What has been the overall effect of the large investment of training funds made by development agencies in developing countries? Kerrigan and Luke (1987) point to a 500 percent increase in project-related training by the World Bank between 1976 and 1981. There is no question that development agencies are a major economic force in the developing world. Wilson (1976) concludes that such assistance programs have favorably influenced work force characteristics. But have they? What other effects--both positive and negative--have emerged from these investments? A meta-analysis of the several evaluation reports, as well as some follow-up and independent evaluation, would add considerably to an understanding of the effectiveness of such expenditures.

International organization development research needs

What are the components of bureaucratic organizations that impede efficiency and effectiveness? What components are people within given cultures willing to work to change? Seth (1985) points to a prevalent problem in developing countries, especially former British colonies--the intransigence and elitism of bureaucratic organizations--"the mismatch between 19th century institutions and the 21st century challenge" (p. 169).

What are the advantages and disadvantages of participative work environments in various cultural settings? What are the impediments for introduction of participative models? Seth (1985) argues that the nonparticipative culture of India (and, again, many parts of the world) prohibits successful governmental efforts to meet the needs of the masses. He believes that "failure to serve people to introduce participative element [sic] will cripple our administration and managerial efforts" (p. 169) Faucheux, Amado, and Laurent (1982) suggest that organization development may have no efficacy except as it relates to participation in the workplace.

What patterns exist for strategic planning within organizations within various cultures? Another organizational issue that confronts

many cultures is the problem of short-term planning. Seth (1985) sees that "short-term planning leads to short-range decisions and yields merely short-range results" (p. 169).

What are the characteristics of excellent organizations in various cultures? What keeps organizations operating at the level of excellence? How are these values affected by cultural values of the country? Dhingra (1985) focuses on the "revival of sick industrial units" as a "national priority" (p. 249). He believes that a "comprehensive sickness revival model" (p. 251) is needed that would focus on the "human organisation, besides gearing up its financial, marketing, technical and other aspects" (p. 250). This is a particularly acute problem in many countries that went through a period in which their industries were nationalized but that are now going through a period of privatization. The businesses that have been successful are easily converted; those doing poorly are of little interest to entrepreneurs or to the public through stock offerings. Thus, many countries continue to run "sick" businesses because no one else wants them, and they continue to be a drain on the national exchequers.

The work of Peters and Waterman (1982) was a beginning example of what such research in excellence might produce, but *In Search of Excellence* has been criticized in many circles for the inadequacy of its research design. Lindberg's (1988) research identified several factors in the Japanese culture that have limited the success of its businesses, especially in the areas of training and development.

What are the varying organizational implications of changing demographics in the workplace in various countries? Lindberg (1988) pointed to the need for increasing egalitarianism within the Japanese workplace. A very different effect, though driven still by changing demographics, is felt within countries that are struggling with appropriate roles for women within the work force, though fundamental religious persons there may argue that there is no role for them at all in the workplace, especially if they must work with men.

What are the differences and similarities in organizational climates cross-culturally? Several variables could be identified for comparison. Kim, Park, and Suzuki (1990) investigated differences in reward structures and expectations in three countries. Other areas open to investigation include motivation, job satisfaction, autonomy, recognition, work attitudes, ethical perspectives, and many other factors often associated with organizational climate.

What factors inhibit the involvement of women in international assignments? What changes are needed in organizations to enable

increasing numbers of women to be involved actively in such assignments? Many assumptions are made as to why so few women are involved in international assignments. (Perhaps as few as 3 percent of such assignments are filled by women.) Yet, Thal and Catera (1979), Copeland and Griggs (1985), and Adler (1984) have challenged these assumptions, suggesting that women can be effectively involved in such assignments.

Is the model for classifying multinational organizational orientation to international integration valid? What proportion of companies fits each classification? Does this differ depending on the country of the company's headquarters? Heenan and Perlmutter (1979) have proposed an organization development model based on the extent to which multinationals integrate personnel from other countries. Their EPRG model has four facets: Ethnocentric (management based on the home country), Polycentric (management based on the host country), Regiocentric (management based on a regional basis), and Geocentric (management based on a global perspective). This normative model can and should be tested. If it proves to be a valid perspective, it can be applied to several companies to determine differences in approach by headquarters country, by industry, and so on.

What is the role of international and cross-cultural experiences in management development, management succession, and strategic planning? With the increasingly global perspective of business, it is reasonable to expect executives to have considerable international and cross-cultural experiences. But the research literature is silent on the reality of this expectation.

What change processes are effective in improving the productivity of typical developing country organizations? Kiggundu (1989) provides a "general profile of a developing country organization" (p. 10), with its inefficiencies and demoralized work environment, along with a list of 10 management and organizational problems common to developing countries. Others (e.g., McLean, 1989; White, 1987) point to the problems encountered by developing countries in which industry is characterized by nationalized organizations. Hage and Finsterbusch (1987) point to the lack of "concrete descriptions of successful organizational change" (p. 6) in Third World countries. The challenge is to create organizations that are consistent with local cultures that also provide a productive, motivated work force. What interventions are useful in bringing about such transitions? Many countries that have had traditional public sector industry are in transition to privatization. What interventions are most useful in this process?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a diverse work force? Adler (1986) and Moran and Harris (1982), among many, speak about the concept of "cultural synergy." Is cultural synergy a realistic goal? How is it experienced? What circumstances lead to synergy rather than destructive conflict? In spite of the increasing diversity in organizations (both within the same country and across countries), there is insufficient research to support either the positive outcomes of such diversity or the conditions that lead to a positive outcome.

What are the organizational implications of international mergers and acquisitions? As Sheth and Eshghi (1989) point out, "In recent years, there have been a significant number of international mergers, acquisitions, and strategic alliances" (p. viii). Such mergers bring together employees and managers with different styles and expectations, "people with different technical and cultural backgrounds, different reward systems, and possibly different career aspirations" (p. viii). Knowledge of the specific problems encountered and successful interventions in response to the problems would be useful contributions to the field.

What is the status of the efforts of organizations in countries throughout the world to undertake quality transformation? Much attention has been given recently to TQM (total quality management) or TQC (total quality creation) efforts, emerging from Japanese success stories and the work of people like Deming (1986) and Juran (1989). How successfully have these efforts been carried out cross-culturally? What factors affect their success levels?

Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the issues needing research in training and organization development in an international or cross-cultural setting are myriad. For the practitioner in this field, this is discouraging news. For the researchers, however, "the field is ripe, ready to harvest." There is a desperate need to find answers to the questions posed in this paper, as well as the almost limitless other questions that exist in the field but have not been addressed here. The HRD field awaits answers to some of these pressing questions.

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High-risk occupations: A challenge for change

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A workforce that is able to change and adapt is critical for the improvement of our nation's productivity. This is especially true in today's highly competitive marketplace. One occupational sector that will continue to feel the need for change is in the high-risk occupations. High-risk occupations require individuals to perform their jobs under potentially life-threatening or injury-prone conditions. In spite of the many precautions taken, many jobs can still be considered high-risk occupations, such as emergency medical, fire, law enforcement, and waste handling. The organizational challenge is to improve the effectiveness and productivity of these occupations while, at the same time, decrease the personal risks to the individuals in those occupations.

Local governments are among the largest employers of high-risk occupations and, thus, have the largest challenge before them. Local governments must not only continue to provide services in the traditional high-risk occupations, but also be responsive to changes in the private sector within that community. For example, if a manufacturing company accidently discharges effluents from a plating process, then the appropriate local government employees must understand the properties of the chemicals and how best to manage the situation. Both situations--maintaining services in traditional high-risk occupations such as police and fire and responding to unforeseen events such as confining spills and AIDs--require new approaches and techniques. However, to achieve these new approaches, local governments must seriously question their present practices, even in the face of reduced budgets and higher costs.

The conventional wisdom of "If it ain't broke, then don't fix it" is no longer acceptable. The costs associated with maintaining the status quo are not inconsequential (Cyert & Mowery, 1987). To minimize costs, local governmental planners must question the basic assumptions on which services are provided. Planners must begin to seek a new understanding of what is meant by individual, agency, and local government performance. The following questions might be asked:

- How is the agency managed?
- What criteria determines recruitment and selection?
- What criteria determines promotion and retention?

- How are jobs defined?
- How are employees prepared for jobs, especially in the high-risk occupational areas?
- How are employees developed and evaluated?

These questions and others should be important to all managers responsible for governmental agencies.

Local governments are rich in history and strong in tradition. Some historical roots can be traced as early as the Roman Empire. Not unexpectedly, much tradition has developed over the years about how best to provide public services, in terms of the management structures used and the goals achieved. The benefits of having a rich history and tradition have been offset somewhat by a resultant tunnel vision among some managers about facing contemporary human resource issues. For example, there has been uneven interest among many governmental agencies to ensure proper certification and licensing of individuals in some high-risk occupations. The explanation for not supporting training and other certification activities seems to be the hope that a specific type of emergency would not occur. Many experiences to the contrary have illustrated the folly of this view. Non-responses by many governmental agencies have resulted in the introduction of guidelines through federal legislation. Such laws have placed additional compliance requirements on governments that were previously negligent in these areas.

Implications for HRD

The implications for HRD are primarily in the liability and professional development areas. The question of liability as a result of HRD practices have fueled many debates within governmental and organizational agencies. Litigation has resulted, or is possible, from a number of work situations, including the following as reported by Ward (1988) and Brim-Donohoe (1981):

- Failure of individual managers and employees to seriously undertake their education and training experiences;
- Failure of managers to value and support education and training to employees;
- Implicitly or explicitly endorse training and education experiences that are not relevant to job expectations;
- Failure to establish standard operating procedures;
- Failure to objectively and systematically evaluate employee performance;

- Failure to acknowledge the human factors during organizational change;
- Failure to document organizational needs and problems; and
- Failure to adhere to established safety practices.

The implication for HRD professional development is that individuals must be prepared to expand their skills, to include training, organizational development, and career development activities. Gilley and Eggland (1989) suggest that HRD professionals must expand their view of their activities and to direct their efforts toward the advancement of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to improve the productivity of employees as well as the efficiency of the organization.

Research questions

To address these and other challenges, the following HRD research questions might be posed:

- What factors influence the quality of high-risk training and the transfer of new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values in the workplace?
- How do the various HRD competency studies address the specific training and education requirements of workers in high-risk work situations?
- What organizational development processes should be used to facilitate employee-supervisory communication in high-risk work situations?
- How can the more contemporary views of organizational design, such as the use of autonomous work groups, be integrated within management systems which traditionally have been hierarchical and autocratic in structure?
- What unique information needs do HRD professionals have who work in high-risk work situations?
- How can the perceptions of managers be changed to value education and training?

Conclusion

High-risk jobs are experiencing rapid change and increased pressures for better service. The question of whether the various governmental agencies in general and HRD professionals in particular can address these changes must be addressed. The continued safety

of the general public and the productivity of individuals in high-risk work situations depends to a large extent on the training and education experiences provided to them. In the same way, the performance of HRD professionals working in high-risk work conditions also depends on the training and education experiences provided them. Additional research is required to increase the effectiveness of this process.

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Trust in the workplace

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Change and trust are not natural bedfollows. Change is inevitable, trust is not. The focus here is not on change, rather it is on the human condition of trust in the change process. The attempt here is to highlight the critical element of trust as a prerequisite for long-term organizational efficiency and effectiveness and the need for the human resource development (HRD) profession to learn more about the condition of trust.

Trust is the firm reliance on the integrity, ability, or character of a person, organization, or thing (*American Heritage Dictionary*, 1982). An individual's trust is naturally threatened by change because one's "firm reliance" is called into question during the change process. The role of HRD is to help plan for and facilitate change. Historically, the changes HRD has tackled have been focused on individuals, small in scope, and relatively insignificant to the organization.

A less comfortable perspective is to think of the change process as a schizophrenic state--the twin personalities, the old and the new, trying to coexist in the same time and space. Schizophrenic people, organizations, and things--in the same time and space--provide fuel to the popular business and industry literature. *Thriving on Chaos* (Peters, 1987) is one such publication. Even the title of the book is intriguing. Who thrives on chaos? The financial investors? The CEO? The hourly workers? The community that supports the enterprise? The character of the nation? Who thrives *on* chaos is probably different from who thrives *in* chaos. Chaos provides the fodder for exploitation and distrust (Swanson, Horton & Kelly, 1986).

Chaos, like the familiar military strategy of keeping the enemy confused, may win both the battle and the war when applied to the marketplace competition. Imagine military strategists using the same "confuse-em" chaos strategy on their own personnel and organization? Maybe keeping an organization confused could win some short-term battles. Even so, the distrust that results from chaos is not a winning formula for the long-term stakeholders in the firm.

When the change taking place in the organization is not understood, people withdraw. They withdraw their passion and job from the workplace and spend it elsewhere. Their withdrawal results in added organizational inefficiency and ineffectiveness. The great irony is that HRD professionals research and facilitate changes for

others while they typically resist it personally and feel the distrust of their own organizations. This condition provides testimony that not enough is known about trust and that more research is needed.

Some observations

The "trust gap" is the term used to analyze the relationship between top management and the rest of the employees in American business and industry in a recent feature topic of *Fortune*. "America's managerial elite have lost touch with the humble employee. Worker's faith in top management is collapsing. CEOs who don't come down from the heights are in for trouble" (Farnham, 1989, 56). The same article cites the 1988 Opinion Research Corporation pool of 100,000 employees that found that they believed they are treated with less respect are less likely to feel positive about information they hear from top management, and have less respect for the ability of top management than they did five years earlier. The extreme side of the distrust picture in the workplace is sabotage and destruction, not simple losses in efficiency and effectiveness resulting from quiet desperation (Farnham, 1989).

White-collar distrust

Most people have a fairly clear view of stereotypical union-management relations. The two camps openly talk about their mistrust for each other. Even so, the mistrust has been contained for many years. It is almost like two football teams, huffing and puffing at each other and at the same time knowing that they needed each other to survive. At times there have been big clashes and big plays, even so, the field, the game, and the strategies were reliably present--the conditions could be trusted, if not the individuals.

The timing of President Ronald Reagan's position to fire the striking air controllers in 1983 and his laissez faire position on corporate buyouts, and new financial incentives set up the basis for a new paradigm of distrust for white-collar workers. Some of the consequences were increased corporate debt, exportation of blue-collar jobs, and reduction of white-collar jobs. Merged companies only need one president, one vice president for operations, and so on. Financiers and lawyers increasingly dominated business and industry without a sophisticated understanding of the goods or services their companies provided. These people made personal wealth without

adding value or quality to their firm and often at the expense of the employees. Their short-term paper performances ravaged traditional white-collar employee loyalty to the firm.

Loyalty among white-collar employees to their firm had been long standing in American business and industry. The essence of the trust was: You (white-collar employee) work long, hard hours for the firm and the firm will take care of you throughout your career. In recent years this idea has not been expressed by many white-collar workers in industry and business. Just a few short years ago loyalty to the firm was a dominant thought among white-collar workers. This loss in trust and its effect on organization efficiency must be staggering.

The heart and soul of white-collar workers are no longer with their firm. As managers look back over their shoulder, they are not afraid of new ideas and technology, but of how their managers will play it out. They lack trust in their leaders. Concurrently, the emergence of the dominance of the knowledge workers, with the locus of control moving from management to the knowledge worker, has created a reactionary self-centered position on the part of white-collar workers (Nichols, 1983).

Training lawyers

Years ago I made a personally profound conclusion about the three prerequisites for productive human relationships with people we care about at home, school, and work. The three prerequisites include love (caring), consistency, and respect (Swanson, 1972).

These prerequisites had become so fundamental to my personal view of the world that I had stopped talking about them. More recently, I was asked to meet with the faculty of a law school about how they were training lawyers (Swanson, 1986). Students had been rebelling in response to their teaching methods and hostile learning environment. I generally don't like lawyers and didn't want the job. I had this irrational thing about lawyers being in the business of winning through bullying along with their general self-serving view of the world. In figuring out my own resistance to taking the job, I came to realize that the fundamental methodology of winning through bullying was a methodology so embedded in this occupational group that it pervaded most aspects of their life. This includes their new workplace, the university classroom, no longer the courthouse. The reality is that not caring, being inconsistent, and being disrespectful are powerful tools that lawyers learn to win over their adversaries.

These "trained killers" had trouble figuring out their faculty role and ended up training their students by "killing" them rather than taking them "on the hunt." Quite literally, this group of intelligent faculty members could not comprehend themselves having a loving (caring), consistent, and respectful relationship with their students and still getting the job of training lawyers accomplished. I believe that leaders in many business and industry organizations are responding just like these law professors.

Trust is the composite construct of love, consistency, and respect, and is a prerequisite to productive human relationships.

Conclusion

A number of tools in the HRD toolbox can enhance trust in the workplace. Most of these tools, which come from social psychology, deal with one-on-one and small-group human interactions and do nothing about trust in the midst of change. Furthermore, these tools are not practically or theoretically connected to organizations *per se*, and economic organizations in particular. The literature on change and performance from the organizational psychology also contains a noticeable void in addressing the issue of trust in the workplace (Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis & Cammann, 1983; Campbell & Campbell, 1988).

In conclusion, it appears that if a trusting person is placed in an untrusting organization, distrust will win every time. Very little is known about designing trust in organizations that are in the turmoil of change. As a result there are a number of research questions about trust that need to be pursued from an HRD perspective:

- What is trust?
- What are the elements of trust in organizations?
- What is trust from the various perspectives of the organization stakeholders?
- What are the interventions for enhancing trust in organizations?
- What are the relative short-term effects of trust interventions in organizations?
- What are the long-term effects of increasing trust in organizations?

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Looking ahead in HRD professional preparation

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It is both fashionable and prudent, at the turn of each decade, for businesses and professions to pause and take stock of the spate of issues and challenges ahead. For HRD practitioners, the inventories of the future are already very long--from the shrinking labor pool to shifts in work force ethics to the impact of a global economy. There may be hidden peril in list-making; the seduction of the new may distract from a very old issue that is fast becoming an overriding concern. The realization is that the HRD profession as a whole is unprepared today to meet current challenges, much less future ones.

No one knows how severe the shortfall of HRD expertise in the United States really is, and no one knows exactly how to talk about it. Up to now, the test of an HRD practitioner's success has been success in selling services or success in getting and keeping a job in a training-hungry organization. Market niche has carried more weight than skills, knowledge, or the true ability of the practitioner to analyze and respond to critical human resource development needs. Granting that marketability of ideas and services is a first condition for gaining influence in HRD, it must still be obvious that marketability is not enough.

Evidence that HRD skills available in the marketplace are insufficient is largely anecdotal, appearing more and more often in the literature of HRD, but not substantiated by research programs that look at psychological, socioeconomic, gender, contextual, or other qualitative variables influencing an HRD practitioner's effectiveness. It is almost as if practitioners had collectively decided that, since HRD represents all things good, positive, and honorable, one need only accrue competencies to guarantee success. This may be a dangerously naive premise. An equally dangerous corollary may be the elevation of role models who represent conventional wisdom. It begins to appear that autopoiesis has set in; HRD embraces a self-referential identity that almost guarantees self-referential closure--with many fingers in the dike to plug the holes of openness to change (Goldstein, 1988).

The growing consensus that U.S. business organizations are in trouble in the competitive marketplace is read as a positive sign of the need for HRD. There may be other implications. A nation at risk in its businesses is in many ways analogous to a nation at risk in its

schools. One risk has not necessarily created the other. Businesses and schools are apparently hemorrhaging simultaneously from the onset of paradigm poverty (Barker, 1988; Kuhn, 1970). For this reason alone, the new rash of school-business partnerships, although critical in the short term, may not stem the bleeding over the long haul. There is some justification for the case that the blind cannot lead the blind.

Organizations and practitioners of all kinds continue--with very slight corrections--to do more of what they have done before, instead of creating something wholly new. They do so with the best of intentions, and they do not deliberately hold their heads in the sand. Many turn uneasily into the winds of change, feeling uncertain, on the brink; living daily with an enormous sense of urgency. People work longer and longer hours, for they want to respond helpfully. But they simply do not know what to do about it all. Attractive as the notion may be, it does not seem likely that participative management, which HRD touts fervently, will be the panacea for business any more than raising teachers' salaries is the panacea for education. Something serious is going on here, having all the earmarks of massive paradigm shifts.

To the extent that businesses are at risk, so, too, are HRD practitioners. Such matters are especially unpleasant to talk about, now that the HRD profession has produced landmark competency studies and certification standards. It is arguable that even these monumental accomplishments, for which the whole profession is grateful, are autopoietic in nature. They may simply represent, more than anything else, the working out of the HRD "puzzles" of an old paradigm. Marsick (1989) may have an unerring finger on the pulse of today's HRD practice when she says that it (like the institutions in which it resides) is largely informed by scientific positivism.

One of the curious hallmarks of any period of paradigm shifting is that the old paradigm still works powerfully to solve certain classes of problems. The number of instances in which it does not work may be growing in numbers and importance day by day, but it is still possible to find knotty problems being successfully solved. No research is being done to identify the classes of problems that are not amenable to solution with the HRD strategies and tools now available. There does not appear to be any scientific effort to identify HRD practitioners who are either on the edge of a new paradigm or are actually creating it as they work. If there are such individuals, and the law of averages would support the belief that there must be, what is different about what they do? What are the markers of the new paradigm? What are the characteristics or experiences of these

paradigm pioneers that set them apart from the autopoietic HRD professional community?

New fields of study, on their way to becoming professions, tend to go through a taxonomic stage that is characterized by exhaustive listing and labeling, sorting and weighing, analyzing and measuring. Human resource development is no exception. All of the positivistic research employed to define and classify finally becomes the staging ground from which the profession must launch itself. What destinations do the new paradigm pioneers anticipate, and how does their vision differ from the "normal" vision of the HRD positivists?

When the first flurry of codifying and standardizing scientific activity has peaked, the reflective practitioner begins to see that the ground of the practice field is already shifting. The established body of knowledge and the accepted, predictive modes of thinking and doing somehow do not measure up to expectations. What the practitioner promised to deliver indeed gets into the hands of the client, but the client is still unsatisfied. An HRD or management positivist would have to say that the terms of the contract have been fulfilled. Yet disquieting clues that all is not well begin to multiply.

For those who ultimately pursue a new paradigm, there seems to be something at first faintly and, later, radically wrong with what gets done and how they feel about working in the field. Alarm bells start to ring in neighboring disciplines and in the marketplace. Suddenly they are aware that the whole profession is at risk, without quite knowing why.

The first response is to work harder, doing more of the same. The second is to do different things using the same formulae. Testing the field to find "what is" becomes the next imperative; survey research is rife. Opinion leaders and futurists are then consulted to unveil "what will be." From that point forward, the individual practitioner's degree of satisfaction with what has been discovered--i.e., the degree of comfort with "answers" of one sort of another--determines what will be salvaged and what will need to be remade by a new paradigm for the profession.

During the period when a new paradigm is forming and an old one still holds power, professional competence resides in the eyes of the beholder. Which beholders see most clearly? Now, at the start of the decade, is HRD as a new profession being held illegitimately to the standards of HRM, and are both being held unthinkingly to the standards and traditions of an already troubled business paradigm? Or is HRD being held to the standards of the education paradigm, also perceived in many quarters to be bankrupt? Does HRD have only the standards it has borrowed from old paradigms? Despite the rising

desperation of the businesses that seek HRD services, is HRD practice already more obsolete and less responsive than it knows?

There are emerging portraits of what the ideal HRD practitioner of the 1990s should be. Looking beyond the standard heroic postures, however, the faces are unclear. Vojta (1988) ruthlessly paints out the figures on the existing canvas of human resource departments and paints in an impressive replacement:

> The standard for today's effective human resources professional--at least at the senior level--is a technological literate, business-minded globalist, capable of understanding and dealing with the macro and micro implications of structural change in the world economy and the issues of gaining new commitment from a new breed of employee who cannot be managed by the old authoritarian standards of reward and punishment. Such people are not being grown in the natural environment of the human resources departments of large corporations. (p. 31)

That impressive replacement does not come from the ranks of HRD. Vojta's ultimate solution is to bring in "line talent" from "businesses that are coping successfully with the external environment." He wants nothing more to do with traditional human resource functions "staffed by technicians and oriented toward obsolete and irrelevant priorities." How that "line talent" got to be so talented about human resource development is not explained. But the point he is making about intolerably narrow sets of competencies in human resources departments is less obscure. Those "technicians" he abhors, whether they fall into HRM or HRD camps, are undoubtedly hard-working practitioners of an old paradigm.

Vojta's is anything but a solo voice. Zaleznik (1988) sees HRM managers trying to "keep the peace at all costs" and avoiding the exercise of direct and independent judgments. Though he believes that "HRM *ought* to be the most important job in every business," Zaleznik recognizes how far it now is from that mark. Management shares culpability for turning HR personnel into "bureaucrats and gatekeepers" from whom independent thinking is neither expected nor welcome. Thus is created an "unholy alliance" that "neither party can afford" (pp. 170-171).

Are the "best" human resources professionals those who are most successful at balancing acts? If today's "model" human resource executive is required to "constantly walk the tightrope between being responsive to a business's goals and objectives while remaining an advocate for the needs, feelings and desires of line workers" (Fraze, 1989), does this present an adequate model for the future? Or will the "best" HR professional of the 90s abandon "the language of getting

along" to confront openly and harness a corporation's "aggressive energies" toward survival in the marketplace? (Zaleznik, 1988).

Yeomans (1989) has polled executives and presented a challenging platform for HRD renewal. At the same time, he reports that many HRD practitioners are "not ready to take on more responsibility for the success of our companies." HRD must "institutionalize the entire training and development process" and take charge of its own renewal (p. 78). The HRD professional appears here as a "reluctant dragon," much in need of stoking inner fires and getting up a full head of steam for the tough 90s. This, too, is a common characterization of what the HRD professional needs to be and do.

The portraiture could go on and on, often depicting the same traits and variables, but almost as often painting a gallery of direct opposites. The successful HRD practitioner for the 90s begins to look like a quick-change artist. He or she is apparently expected to be liberally educated, more knowledgable than anyone else in the organization (not having the luxury of "technical" specialization after the tirades of the 80s against it), and more accountable than anyone else for generating "people power." The new breed ought to be consummate business persons and politicians, human relations experts, economists, wizards of mergers, trainers of trainers, generators of creativity, and specialists of survival. Lists grow longer and longer, perhaps adding up to corporate wish lists that no one could fulfill. It is even possible that business executives do not really know what they want, except to survive and grow. And if that is true, they may not be wholly reliable guides as to how HRD practitioners need to be prepared in the future. It could be a bit like asking the patient on the operating table what kind of doctor he needs.

There is another question. If businesses commonly find HRM and HRD functions out of alignment with new priorities and directions, how much research has been done to find out why? It is not enough to sense that perceived lack of fit may be a question of incompatible paradigms. Researchers need to find out when, where, and why such misfits occur before capitulating the case to upper management. It is a common finding among change agents that when an organization lives by old paradigms, it is literally blinded to any new ones. Such organizations need specific instances of paradigm "pinch" called to their attention, and HRD needs a research base for doing that.

Very little is actually known about HRD professionals. This may come as a surprise and may even be disputed. But what data exist are largely the product of voluminous self-reporting and self-confidence.

The commonalities are that whoever asks about practitioners asks about what they say, how much money they make, how educated they are, and what tools they are using. There are few data on philosophical orientations, socioeconomic variables, psychological variables, or variables in the work context that lead to success or failure. Is there, for example, a "hardiness" factor that overrides all other variables? Or is success or failure organizationally determined more often than it is under the control of the individual? It is tempting to assert that different organizations may need different kinds of HRD leadership at different points in time, but there is no body of research to support this logic.

To a potential chorus of protesters, one concession is due. Certain role models are interviewed over and over. But even these tend to be human interest stories, not instruments of scientific inquiry. There do not appear to be qualitative studies of any kind that could inform the preparation of new practitioners or the renewal of existing ones. There are no systematic studies of HRD leaders, as there are of CEOs and middle managers. It seems short-sighted to assume that HRD leadership is--or should be--exactly like the leadership of today's line managers.

Until researchers begin to be really curious about the world of the HRD professional, inner and outer, and not merely curious about the tasks performed and projects that get done, the profession is unlikely to establish itself as an enduring part of the American culture.

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